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FANCY FURNISHINGS

WALL BRACKETS.

IN the decorative treatment of wall surfaces, a very important part is played by the forms and colors of the wall brackets which are destined to be placed upon the walls of an apartment. The mural decorations of our rooms are no longer confined to fresco painting, oak panelling, or arras, as in days gone by; a vast range of varied ornamentation is now within easy reach of the multitude. This being so, it is but natural that the most effective and economic means of treating our wall surfaces should be adopted by most people who presume to possess even a modicum of good taste. Dainty wall papers, pictures, plaques and brackets are now the approved items of mural display. Wall brackets of every conceivable shape and color

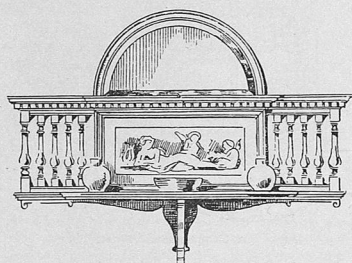


Fig. 1. Simple Wall Bracket.

are now in vogue, for enamelling is, as we all know, woefully prevalent in this department of home art.

As a rule, the generality of wall-brackets suffer from two common errors—they are frequently made too large, and consequently look heavy and inadequately supported, and they are also often made in a too split-up manner. This latter quality, *i. e.*, having too many little shelves, mirrors, spindles and pediments, is often an indication of inferiority. The majority of high-class wall brackets that are now being made are beginning to assume a more modest and dignified appearance.

Such a character certainly attaches to the dainty little china shelf that is shown in Fig. 1. It is extremely simple, and quite unlike the brackets that were, until recently, in vogue. The centre compartment is intended to frame an autotype or a small water-color drawing, and in the semi-circular panel above it is proposed to insert a bevelled mirror.

Corner brackets are often the only things wherewith to furnish an empty corner of a room. These articles are capable of a considerable variety of treatment, and, as a rule, lend themselves very readily to the passing changes of fashion. The design which is illustrated in

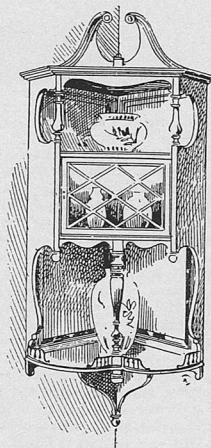


Fig. 2. Corner Bracket.

our fourth sketch shows an effective little angle cupboard in the Queen Anne style. The abundant shaping of the shelves and sides, as well as the "swan-neck" pediment, are features which are, perhaps, more allowable in a corner bracket than they would be in a furniture of greater size and importance.

A dainty little china cupboard is shown in our second illustration. Here, again, an attempt has been made to depart from the usual ungainly height of the orthodox wall bracket. In this example the disposition of the cupboard and open spaces is judiciously arranged, so that the article altogether looks as though it were intended to be hung upon a wall. This, and also the companion design, could, with very

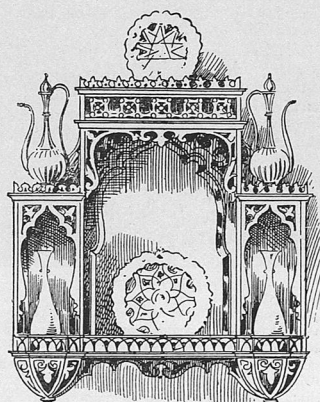


Fig. 3. Bracket in the Moorish Style.

slight modifications, be transformed into convenient and inexpensive over-doors.

In the matter of brackets though, as in items of greater importance, due attention must at all times be given to the variances of fashionable taste. The French style, for instance, is just as applicable to these articles as it is to cabinets and sofas, and Moorish art, too, has not altogether been discarded by the public. The effectiveness of Cairene frets, and the stained green hues which modern Anglo-Moresque cabinet work is made to assume, has insured the favor of many lovers of Oriental art. Such a shapely *étagère* as that shown in our third sketch would make a most interesting feature on a drawing-room wall, and, when provided with its quantum of nick-nacks, it would assume considerable importance as a piece of color in the apartment.

A colonial bracket is shown in Fig. 4, which would be an appropriate wall decoration for a colonial parlor or sitting-room.

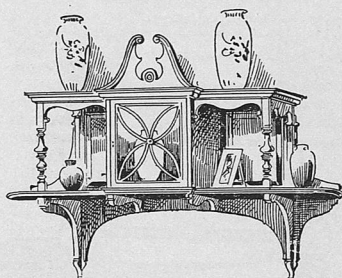


Fig. 4. Colonial Bracket.]



LEATHER embossing may be said to have been until quite recently one of the lost arts, and we are only now awakening to the peculiar adaptability of its medium for many articles of ornament; for the great and splendid technique of the past, the various ways in which leather was fashioned and the many artistic uses to which embossed leather could be put were quite forgotten. Where used for a commonplace article, such as a pocket book, a portmanteau, or a purse, we have been accustomed to see it employed as a smooth, undecorated covering without any artistic treatment of the material itself.

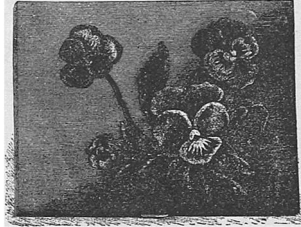
The craft of decorating leather has in all probability existed since the time leather has been used at all. The earliest examples extant are, perhaps, the sword-belts of the Romans, which were cut and notched in primitive designs. It grew to be a flourishing craft in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, where we find it employed on a multitude of articles, but, of course, mostly on book covers; it reached its zenith dur-

ing the Renaissance. It began to disappear towards the end of the eighteenth century, and remained lost up to the first half of this century, when a revival took place in Germany. Its disappearance is understood when one calls to mind the practice of substituting inferior imitations of costly materials that has degraded almost all crafts in modern times. It is quite possible to imagine that an artist who spent time and energy in embossing and otherwise decorating leather, would feel hardly grateful to an enterprising manufacturer who produced a caricature of his creations in papier-mache.

One of the greatest attractions of this craft is the scope it gives to original design, owing to the multiplicity of uses to which leather may be put. The early Spanish wall-hangings and chair work of embossed leather are world-renowned.

A chair in embossed leather is illustrated herewith. While the drawing preserves the charac-

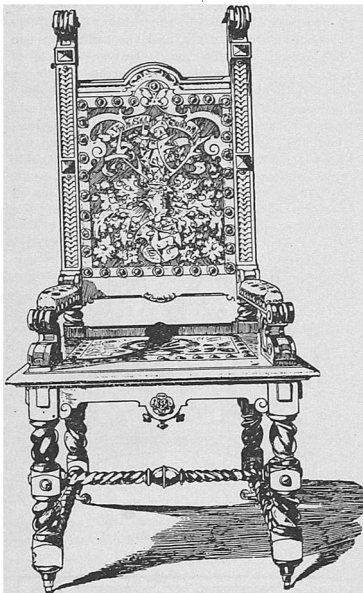
sible to choose such fruit and flowers as possess a soft bloom; for instance, pansies, auriculas, dahlias, peaches, apricots and also butterflies are most suitable, although there is no reason why arabesques and landscapes, etc., may



Painting on Velvet.

not also be treated in this manner. As in all other artistic work, skill and practice are needed for perfection in this art—the colors are, however, not laid on with the brush, but strewn lightly on the motive, after it has been painted over with the white fixative—and the effect is most charming.

The design is traced on the ground stuff in the usual way, either by means of transparent paper and graphite, or drawn in free hand. Then some of the fixative is put with a knife point in the glass saucer and the thick mass thinned with a few drops of the other liquid; this is then painted, say on one flower at a time, and the required color is taken up with the quill and smoothly strewn over the flower, any remaining loose grains being subsequently blown off. A few trials will soon initiate the worker into the right quantity of powder and thickness of the fixative. If the latter be too thin, the powder will not adhere sufficiently, and if the contrary, the powder is apt to lie too thick.

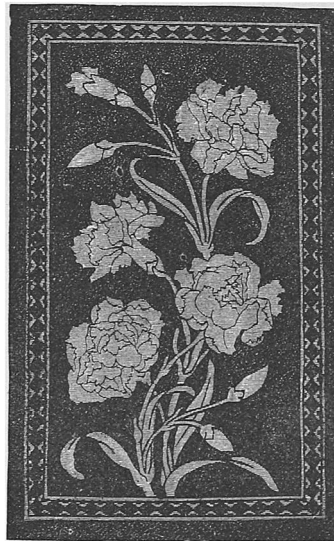


Chair in Decorated Leather.

ter of the design with sharper definition on the reduced scale, necessitated by the available space, it does not suggest the contrast of slightly varied planes, which in leather work, as in other forms of bas-relief, impart the chief value to the work.



A NEW style of decorative work is placed before us under the above title, relative to which, we must first remark, it does not mean painting on velvet, but producing an effect like applied velvet on other surfaces. It can be used for all household decorative purposes, and done on paper, cardboard, wood, silk or cloth; even ground glass, porcelain and plaster can be thus decorated. The materials are made up in handy metal boxes, and consist of the colors, fixative and thinning liquid, a glass saucer, brushes and hard feather quill, to which are added a few tubes of gold and bronze powder. The full scale includes about twenty colors, which can again be mixed to produce other tones. To keep up the velvety impression of the painting, it is de-

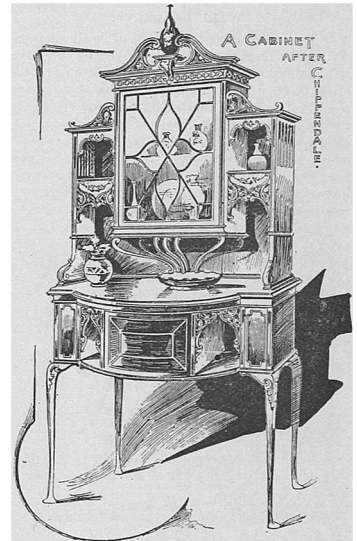


Panel in Pokerwork.

An equally smooth underground is the best means towards securing upper equality of surface, and great care must be taken never to leave any uncovered spaces, or spots will ensue. When several colors are placed side by side, the whole underground may be made at once, and the powdered color strewn on separately for each leaf or petal. Any one with a taste for

form and color will soon find out how to do this. When mixed colors are desired, the two powders are put in the quill and then shaken together until mixed; the finger being meanwhile held over the end of the quill, to prevent the powder falling out. Superfluous and loose powdering must be most cautiously removed, lest injury should be done to the under painting. Veins of leaves and flowers are lightly scratched out with a needle. The beginner, who finds the work is not satisfactory on the first attempt, may improve the outlines by a few touches of water colors, but must try to do so without injuring the general velvety impression of the work.

This sort of painting is really an interesting occupation, and makes no surrounding dirt, its soft, velvety appearance renders it suitable for decorating all sorts of cushions and curtains, albums, boxes, note-books, letter paper, etc., also take the colors, and offer a wide field for its use.



A Chippendale Cabinet.

In the case of wall texts or large lettering, it is advisable to strew at least the capital letters over with gold or bronze powder.

The inventor of this new decorative work, Otto Bachman in Saulgau, Wurtemberg, has taken out a patent for the same.



THE scorch work panel in our illustration shows the exception of an elaborately finished background, to a lightly done design. This is done by searing the entire background to a rich dark brown tone, by means of short, firm strokes of the hot pencil. The pattern is left quite white, with clear, distinct outlines, and afterwards finished with the necessary lines, for decorative work, only intended to be seen from a distance. Our panel measures 13 in. high by 7½ in. broad, and allows the use of just a moderate touch of color for the flowers and leaves, either thinned oil or water colors may, in accordance with the worker's taste, be taken. The edge must, however, be scorched in a light brown tone.